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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 26th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. HAMBURGER (Netherlands)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 97: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 96: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(d) POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 97: ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution on application of the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in international cooperation on the environment (A/C.2/51/L.11)

1. Mr. PANKIN (Russian Federation) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Georgia, Latvia and Tajikistan.

AGENDA ITEM 96: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued) (A/51/73, A/51/87, A/51/120, A/51/127, A/51/138, A/51/208-S/1996/543 A/51/210, A/51/295, A/51/314, A/51/357, A/51/375, A/51/462-S/1996/831 and A/51/529)

(d) POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (A/51/90, A/51/154 and A/51/350)

2. Dr. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that the momentum for follow-up to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) that had been generated by the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action was being carried forward by the Task Force on Basic Social Services for All, which had been established by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) in 1995. The ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All which was comprised of 19 United Nations organizations, sought to provide guidance to the United Nations resident coordinator system in extending effective and coordinated assistance to Governments in their efforts to carry out commitments undertaken at recent United Nations conferences. Several activities begun by the Inter-Agency Task Force were continuing under the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All, which had set up a new working group on primary health care, with the World Health Organization (WHO) as the lead agency. All of the working groups were devoting special attention to defining indicators that could be readily used by countries to monitor their progress in reaching agreed conference goals.

3. The Working Group on International Migration, which was the only working group to include an intergovernmental organization in its membership - the International Organization for Migration (IOM) - was updating the guidance note on issues in international migration and development, which would be included in the report of the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All to the forthcoming thirtieth session of the Commission on Population and Development. The Working Group had also decided to organize a technical symposium on international migration to be held in 1998, the results of which would be communicated to Governments and to intergovernmental groups concerned with international migration.

4. At the national level, countries were putting in place strategies and programmes designed to attain the goals of the Conference and meet a broad range of social sector needs. Almost all countries were reorienting their family-planning programmes to include the broader reproductive rights/reproductive health approach of the Conference. Several countries were pursuing a

comprehensive reproductive health approach that assigned high priority to the quality of care. Many had initiated programmes geared to meet the special needs of adolescents, and a number of countries were focusing on the role and involvement of men in reproductive health.

5. Women's empowerment and participation in decision-making processes was a crucial aspect of the reproductive health approach and, increasingly, gender concerns were being taken into account. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) had sponsored a Technical Consultation on Female Genital Mutilation, which had developed a manual for incorporating efforts to eradicate female genital mutilation into reproductive health programmes. In response to the Conference's emphasis on the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the Fund had established an NGO Advisory Committee, which had met twice. In addition to implementing its recommendations, the Fund was organizing Government/NGO dialogues and was building NGO capacity by extending assistance for management and leadership training to NGOs.

6. The Programme of Action of the Conference stated that two thirds of the resources needed for its implementation should come from domestic funding. Countries must give priority in their budgets to increased allocations to expand access to basic social services, including those in the Programme of Action's population package. In the two years since the Conference, the Fund's partnership countries had expanded their population and reproductive health programmes and had increased the resources allocated to that sector. UNFPA was working to strengthen countries' capacity to track domestic financing of population activities, and planned to include a section on domestic expenditure in its annual Global Population Assistance Report. The international community must also do its part to fulfil the financing goals agreed at the Conference. The 20/20 initiative would certainly promote increased allocations to the social sector at both the national and international donor levels.

7. In 1994, international assistance for population had totalled $1.6 billion as compared to $1.3 billion in 1993. Donor assistance had been $1.2 billion in 1994 as compared to $966 million in 1993, and loans from development banks had stood at $436 million in 1994 as compared to $344 million in 1993. However, that increase of approximately 25 per cent between 1993 and 1994 must be seen in the context of the level of population assistance needed to implement the Programme of Action's population package. At the Conference, it had been agreed that donor assistance for population needed to reach $5.7 billion by the year 2000. The international community had a long way to go to meet that goal.

8. General Assembly resolution 50/124 reiterated the importance of South-South cooperation for the successful implementation of the Programme of Action. UNFPA provided assistance to Partners in Population and Development, an intergovernmental organization founded by 10 countries to promote South-South cooperation in reproductive health, and it directly supported the South-South initiative for centres for excellence in reproductive health. All UNFPA field offices were actively promoting South-South opportunities.

9. Decision 96/15 of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/UNFPA Executive Board enhanced the Fund's capacity to implement the Programme of Action and endorsed the new approach to the allocation of UNFPA resources based

on a country's level of achievement of the goals and objectives of the Conference. The new approach paid special attention to low-income countries, the least developed countries and Africa, and also recognized the urgent need to provide temporary assistance to countries with economies in transition, as called for in General Assembly resolution 50/124.

10. Ms. HERNANDEZ (Costa Rica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that although the Group would have liked to see the membership of the Commission on Population and Development increased to 53, even with 47 members the Commission would be able to help the Economic and Social Council monitor, review and assess the implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and interregional levels. Every effort must be made to meet the goals of the Programme of Action for the future and prosperity of nations would be materially affected by the actions taken in the next two decades.

11. The Programme of Action estimated that approximately two thirds of the projected costs in developing countries would have to come from domestic resources and one third, or $5.7 billion by the year 2000, from the international donor community. In spite of all the efforts that had been made, the resources currently available were clearly insufficient. Innovative ways of resource mobilization must be sought. In its decision 96/15, the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board underscored the need for adequate mobilization of resources at the national and international levels as well as of new and additional resources to developing countries from all sources, including multilateral, bilateral and private sources. The Board had decided that resource allocation must be based on a comprehensive estimation of a country's current needs and requirements and would have to take fully into consideration coherent national programmes, plans and strategies on population and development and the need for external resources to supplement national financial efforts in the area of population and development.

12. General Assembly resolution 50/124 reiterated the importance of South-South cooperation for the successful implementation of the Programme of Action. That concept remained valid and relevant and was likely to assume additional importance in the light of the changes occurring in the international system and their impact on the traditional structure of multilateral technical cooperation.

13. Indeed, continued support and commitment were required if the full range of activities outlined in the Programme of Action were to be successfully implemented.

14. Dr. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said, at the domestic level, UNFPA was helping countries to allocate more resources to their population and reproductive health programmes. The Fund's working groups on those themes were considering ways to mobilize resources and finance social sector programmes.

15. Whereas in 1995 the Fund's resources had increased substantially, in 1996, the situation had been less positive owing to the fact that one major donor had reduced its foreign aid contributions for population by 38 per cent. All donors should increase their support in order to meet the goals that had been agreed by them by the year 2000. Moreover, ways should be found to tap the private

sector; UNFPA had approached several important corporations in both the North and South.

16. Ms. BROWNE (Ireland) said that she was speaking on behalf of the European Union and that Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, which were Associated Countries, as well as Iceland, aligned themselves with the statement. The European Union wished to reiterate the importance which it attached to the full and effective implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action.

17. Despite measures to that end taken by some countries, more concerted action was needed to enable women and men to have access to the reproductive health care and services they needed. The advancement and empowerment of women and their involvement in decision-making processes were essential to the success of national population programmes.

18. The European Union continued to attach great importance to the need for a reappraisal of the work programme of the Commission on Population and Development. Consideration also must be given to how best to meet the challenges which had arisen in connection with the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action while conserving the essential elements of the Commission's long-term work programme. Adequate preparations for the meetings of the Commission were crucial if it was to perform its central role of reviewing the follow-up to and implementation of the Programme of Action. The role of the Commission must be examined as part of the overall review of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council.

19. The European Union welcomed the progress made by the United Nations system in seeking to ensure a coordinated and integrated follow-up to the Programme of Action. The timely manner in which the necessary readjustments had been made and guidelines developed for use at the field level was an example for other parts of the system. Focus must now be placed on attaining the goals set and fulfilling unmet needs for reproductive health services.

20. The delegations on whose behalf she was speaking welcomed the information provided in the Secretary-General's report (A/51/350) on the work of the various task forces established to monitor progress in the implementation of the various global conferences. They also welcomed the important steps taken during the past 18 months by UNFPA to reorient its activities in order to clarify its role in the follow-up to the Programme of Action. The European Union noted with satisfaction that donor funding of population activities had increased substantially and that the overall flow to recipients in the most populous regions of the world had doubled in 1994 as compared to 1993. However, the mobilization of additional domestic and international resources remained essential to the effective follow-up to the Programme of Action. The European Union, through its individual members and the European Community, would continue to support Governments in their efforts to implement the Programme of Action.

21. Dr. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that it was necessary to consider the place of the Commission on Population and Development with respect to other commissions that dealt with the same issues. Discussions were under way between UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund

(UNICEF), UNFPA and the Secretariat on ways of rationalizing reporting requirements. At its next session, the Commission should consider which topics it needed to deal with specifically and which ones it might be able to assign to other commissions in order to avoid overlapping.

22. Mr. CHAMIE (Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis) said that the Commission on Population and Development currently met for five days and had a much larger agenda than in the past. Efforts were being made to reduce and streamline documentation being prepared for the Commission and the latter was working closely with the Statistical Commission on the theme of international migration.

23. Mr. WANG Qun said that his delegation was pleased that the Programme of Action was being implemented at all levels, in all areas and in an increasingly thorough manner and was deeply grateful that the Commission on Population and Development and the Inter-Agency Task Force on Basic Social Services for All had accomplished a great deal with respect to reproductive rights and health, primary care and basic education.

24. Each country should implement the Programme of Action according to its own conditions and decide on its own population policies, objectives, programmes and priorities. A favourable international environment and adequate financial resources were essential for the implementation of the Programme of Action and for a comprehensive solution to the problems of population and development. Accordingly, the international community, in particular, the developed countries, should honour their commitments to provide new and additional resources for the implementation of the Programme of Action.

25. The assistance provided by the United Nations in the area of population and development should be free of conditions. The attaching of conditions ran counter to the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, the principle of equality and mutual benefit in international development cooperation and the principle of the universality and neutrality of United Nations development agencies.

26. The key role of the Commission on Population and Development should be further strengthened and coordination and cooperation between United Nations agencies and recipient Governments should also be improved.

27. His delegation was pleased to note that the Commission had decided to include the challenge of international migration as the major theme for its next session. The issue should be discussed in depth in the context of economic growth and sustainable development.

28. As a country with a huge population, China was acutely aware of its responsibility and of the role it could play with respect to the issue of population and development. He described a number of actions taken by his Government and said that it would continue to strive for the comprehensive implementation of the Programme of Action.

29. Dr. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that her delegation completely agreed with the representative of China that approaches and programmes must be flexible and that no standard approach to population programmes was possible. However, certain principles which had been agreed upon at the International Conference on Population and Development and endorsed by the General Assembly should be implemented in all countries. She, agreed that resources to implement the Programme of Action should be additional to existing resources.

30. Mrs. SHAHANI (Philippines) said that the Philippines was convinced that the reproductive health approach introduced at the Conference should facilitate the efforts of all countries to improve the status of women in all areas of their lives. The approach was consistent with her Government's policy, which also prohibited abortion as a method of family planning. Her delegation welcomed the activities being pursued by the United Nations system in response to the Programme of Action and hoped that system-wide coordination would be pursued in a coherent manner. It agreed that the Commission on Population and Development had the primary responsibility for reviewing the follow-up and implementation of the Programme of Action.

31. Her delegation hoped that the Commission would provide the international community with specific direction on the question of international migration, with a view to translating into action the relevant sections of the Programme of Action. The Commission should also play an important role in implementing the cross-cutting themes of recent global conferences as they related to population and development, such as poverty eradication and promotion of sustainable human settlements development. She underscored the important relationship between food security issues and population questions and hoped that the subject would continue to receive close attention.

32. The international community should develop indicators as soon as possible which would permit a reliable measure of progress in achieving the goals of the Programme of Action. One set of indicators should measure the volume and quality of efforts exerted, inter alia, by countries themselves, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations. A second set of indicators should measure concrete substantive results in such areas as gender equality, reproductive health, women's participation and male involvement in reproductive health and family planning. Her delegation therefore encouraged the three task forces established by the Administrative Committee on Coordination to accelerate their work on such concerns so that they could make concrete suggestions.

33. Dr. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that the Working Group on International Migration had prepared a guidance note on issues in international migration and development and had proposed a technical meeting on various topics in 1998.

34. On the question of food security, she pointed out that the preparatory work for the World Food Summit had dealt with population issues in a very satisfactory manner and that most areas of disagreement had been resolved. In conclusion, she noted that guidelines being elaborated by the ACC Task Force on Basic Social Services for All were expected to be ready by early March.

35. Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh) emphasized that the goals of the Programme of Action could be achieved only if priority attention was accorded to sustained economic growth and development and, in particular, to the eradication of poverty. Furthermore, an enabling international environment for the implementation of national population policies was crucial, and the commitment to accord special priority to the least developed countries must therefore be expeditiously translated into action.

36. His Government had taken the necessary initial steps to provide essential social services to the most vulnerable segments of society, in particular, women. The Bretton Woods institutions should pay greater attention to social dimensions in the context of the structural adjustment measures which they recommended.

37. His delegation was pleased that UNFPA had oriented its programme focus and operational strategies to reproductive health, population and development strategies and advocacy. It was also pleased to note the collaboration of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) with partners in various sectors. The arrangements made by the Population Division to disseminate technical information on population issues, through such facilities as the Global Population Information Network (POPIN) had made it very convenient to access and utilize such information.

38. Increasing numbers of countries were becoming senders, receivers, or both simultaneously, of migrants. His delegation noted with interest the joint communiqué issued on 14 March 1996 following the Regional Conference on Migration held in Puebla, Mexico. It was also closely following the activities of the Working Group on International Migration and hoped that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) would, pursuant to the decisions to be taken by the General Assembly at its current session, be more closely involved with United Nations activities relating to migration. His delegation welcomed the fact that the theme for the 1997 session of the Commission on Population and Development would be international migration and that technical symposiums on the subject would be held in 1998. In conclusion, he said that the modest success of population policies in Bangladesh was testimony to how effective international cooperation could be. The need for a genuine global partnership based on shared but differentiated responsibilities was more essential than ever before.

39. Dr. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that the Bretton Woods institutions were actively involved in the follow-up to and implementation of the Programme of Action, inter alia, in the areas of basic education, in particular, the education of girls, and health reforms. The institutions were very open to suggestions regarding the monitoring of the use of their allocations. The International Monetary Fund had made a positive contribution, inter alia, in the discussions of the impact of structural adjustment programmes on social development policies.

40. Mr. SCHATZER (International Organization for Migration (IOM)) said that his organization had participated in all the major United Nations conferences in recent years and it welcomed the recent initiative by the Administrator of UNDP

to involve its field representatives in meetings convened at the country level by resident coordinators.

41. In the field of humanitarian migration, IOM worked with other parties to assist forcibly displaced populations in such recent crises as those in the Great Lakes region, Chechnya and the former Yugoslavia. It also assisted displaced populations in post-crisis situations to go home, helped unsuccessful asylum-seekers and, increasingly, victims of trafficking and other stranded persons seeking to return home through irregular channels. In the area of migration for development, IOM had for several decades carried out programmes predicated on the concept that migration, particularly of highly skilled persons, could promote economic and social development. In the field of technical cooperation, IOM helped States to build the capacity to develop and implement adequate migration policies by providing expert technical advice and training and arranged for States and other international organizations to share experiences and management methods.

42. With regard to the debate, research and information on migration, IOM had focused on encouraging debate at the intergovernmental level through conferences on such issues as trafficking in migrants, respect for the rights and dignity of migrants, migration and the environment and emigration dynamics in developing countries. The dissemination of credible information about the realities and risks of irregular migration, which targeted persons considering migration, was an area in which IOM had gained considerable experience in recent years, and IOM looked forward to sharing that experience with the United Nations.

43. Mr. PANKIN (Russian Federation) said that the Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (A/51/350) provided only an incomplete picture of the progress that had been made. It was therefore important to develop, as soon as possible, indicators for assessing all the measures that had been undertaken.

44. His delegation was pleased that the various organizations and agencies of the United Nations system were endeavouring to incorporate the implementation of the Cairo recommendations into their activities. At the same time, it would hardly be reasonable to claim that a routine activity in a given area was specifically geared to implement the guidelines of the Cairo Conference; it seemed that a number of organizations had made such assertions.

45. His delegation was pleased that the efforts of the United Nations system to implement the recommendations of the Conference had an institutional framework and were being carried out rather actively, particularly at the headquarters level. His delegation commended the publication and distribution of the guidelines for the United Nations resident coordinator system and the adoption of a general declaration on support. At the same time, it would be useful to know how effective such concerted efforts were and whether it was possible to coordinate work in the full sense of the word. Additional information should be provided on the interaction between agencies and bodies involved in population in the field (country and regional levels), since the Secretary-General's report did not contain sufficient information on that subject.

46. His delegation commended the work on population themes carried out by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Population and Development. In particular, it attached great importance to the resolutions of the Commission on further measures to implement the recommendations of the Cairo Conference and on a programme of work in the field of population. It was important to review the scope, content and structure of the Commission's programme of work, taking into account the new planning period. In finalizing the programme, due emphasis should be placed on the regional context of population and development issues, in particular, the urgent problems of the group of countries with economies in transition.

47. There had been clear progress in the overall involvement of United Nations organizations in the population problems of countries in transition. His delegation supported the so-called new approach of UNFPA to the distribution of resources, and stressed the need to provide temporary assistance to countries in transition. The overall share of international resources allocated to the population needs of that group of countries continued to be extremely low. His delegation had repeatedly stressed the critical situation experienced by countries in transition in the area of migration, and that factor should be taken into account in work on problems related to international migration.

48. His delegation supported the increasing use of electronic means, in particular the Internet, to disseminate information about population activities. In that regard, it would be useful to strengthen the Global Population Information Network. His delegation hoped that it would be possible to speed up the preparation of various statistical handbooks on population problems and ensure their timely publication.

49. Mr. CHAMIE (Department of Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis), replying to the representative of the Russian Federation, said that the Population Division had been gathering information on indicators from the relevant agencies and organizations and expected to have a wallchart highlighting 12 indicators by 1997. The indicators on the chart were based in general on the goals set by the various recent international conferences, and reflected the mandate of the Task Force on Basic Social Services for All.

50. He understood the difficulties which the countries in transition faced in providing up-to-date comparable data and hoped that the situation would improve in the coming years, particularly with respect to data on maternal and child mortality. Composite indexes could not be compiled in the absence of adequate data.

51. Joint efforts involving the relevant players were yielding productive results. Discussions in the Commission on Population and Development covered a broad range of topics as well as regional variations. The Department would continue to make whatever data and information it had available in as many formats as possible. The POPIN project was moving forward, and it was hoped that an increased number of countries, in particular developing countries and countries in transition, would be able to benefit from the information supplied.

52. Dr. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that each group would define its own indicators to measure progress towards its own goals. UNFPA was making efforts to help countries improve the quality of data collected. It should be remembered that only two years had passed since the Conference, and progress was just becoming measurable.

53. Mr. RONNEBERG (Marshall Islands) said that, as a result of the Cairo Conference, the Pacific Island countries had begun a process of regional cooperation and coordination. As there were many similarities in the root causes of their problems they had found that a regional approach was the most efficient way to pursue their mutual interests. Their initial optimism following the Cairo Conference had been short-lived, however, once they realized that the intensity of international assistance was declining rapidly. While Governments had taken steps to implement the Programme of Action, the most significant steps had been taken at the local community level. Indeed, community groups had done a remarkable job in raising awareness on health and population issues.

54. One of the few encouraging sections in the report of the Secretary-General was that concerning the 20/20 initiative. The Marshall Islands had tried to do the best with its meagre resources, and simply requested that countries with the capacity to assist should look towards the Pacific in their implementation strategies for the Programme of Action. In turn, his Government pledged to work towards improving its reporting capacity and to cooperate closely with all agencies and departments of the United Nations system.

55. Mr. MAHUGU (Kenya) said that Kenya, with a population growth rate of 3 per cent per year, was continuing to emphasize family planning services, basic education and reproductive health in order to lower that rate. Accordingly, Kenya had increased its spending in that sector, but international cooperation, including South-South cooperation, was essential for the success of the Programme of Action. It commended the people-centred approach to development.

56. Kenya was of the view that the enhancement of institutional mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels was central to the follow-up to the Cairo Conference, and that all financial commitments made at the Conference should be honoured.

57. Mr. WINNICK (United States of America) said that the report of the Secretary-General provided an exhaustive compendium of measures that had been taken since the Cairo Conference and was useful as a gauge of the international community's commitment to implementing the Programme of Action. It showed, inter alia, that different parts of the United Nations system could work together to achieve common goals and that South-South cooperation could be an effective means for promoting technical assistance among developing countries. However, in its next report the Secretariat should concentrate, instead, on the selection of indicators by the working groups and on the concrete results of the activities noted in the present report. Only then would it be possible to gauge what progress had been made in achieving the goals of the Programme of Action.

58. Dr. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) said that progress in making the Programme of Action operational had been slow, but the development of indicators was a step in the direction of monitoring the quantitative impact. She hoped that the changes would be measurable by the next report. In general, family planning issues had been treated very gingerly in multilateral settings, but after the Conference some progress had been made in encouraging the frank discussion that would help in reaching agreed goals in that area.

59. Mr. ABDELLATIF (Egypt) said that the policies and measures contained in the Programme of Action should be fully implemented if population numbers were to stabilize. Although an adequate flow of financial resources was vital, financial constraints remained a major obstacles. No practical measures, however, had ensued from the various consultations called with a view to exchanging ideas on how to generate additional resources for population programmes. Although he welcomed those consultations, they should not become an end in itself. Nor should the commitments contained in the ICDP Programme of Action be ignored. Furthermore, the mandate of the ACC Task Force on Basic Services for All should be extended to include population issues that were relevant to the environment, human settlements and food. He added that, notwithstanding its political dimensions, international migration was another key issue to be addressed at international level in view of the significant repercussions which it had on population and development in the many countries now affected by inward or outward flows of migrants. Finally, having reiterated his delegation's support for resolution 1996/1 of the Commission on Population and Development concerning the need to protect the long-term work programme if the Population Division, he reaffirmed that the provision of adequate financial resources was essential in order to achieve the objectives outlined in the Programme of Action.

60. Mr. CASSAR (Malta) said that comprehensive approach taken in the Cairo Programme of Action, was the key to the appropriate development of national programmes and policies. However, broad parameters and frameworks should not be transformed into rigid prescriptions to be universally imposed.

61. People were the most valuable resource of any nation; population goals and policies were integral parts of economic and social development, the principal aim of which was to improve the quality of life of all people. Creation of the right global environment was a shared responsibility and international cooperation and assistance were fundamental. Lack of development and absolute poverty were the greatest challenge currently facing the international community.

62. Experience had shown that failure to protect the most vulnerable widened the circle of vulnerability. Though population growth was undoubtedly a significant aspect of the problem, population control on its own was not a panacea for all ills. Commitment to social justice and international solidarity remained the key principles which could ensure global development and universal progress in peace.

63. Miss JACOBSEN (Norway) said that follow-up to the global conferences posed challenges in terms of communication, coordination and avoiding duplication. The three ACC Task Forces appeared to be a step in the right direction, but an efficient way of organizing the division of work with respect to the intergovernmental organs of the United Nations had yet to be found. While the report of the Secretary-General provided useful background information, the lack of analysis limited its usefulness as a basis for debate and recommendation.

64. She noted with satisfaction that information on population and development was easily accessible via the electronic media. However, that did not mean that everyone received such information.

65. Finally, Norway had taken a special interest in ensuring that the commitment made to the 20/20 initiative at the Copenhagen Summit was translated into action. That concept had a special appeal because the commitments were mutual, both for donors and recipients. It should allow developing countries and their partners to give higher priority to basic social services.

66. Mr. PRENDERGAST (Jamaica), speaking also on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and Suriname, commended the work of the Inter-Agency Task Force in implementing the Programme of Action and noted that the purpose of the recently established ACC Task Forces was to galvanize the United Nations system around the priority goals emanating from the recent conferences.

67. The Caribbean Community had sought to address the pertinent issues in the area of population and development by elaborating a "Caribbean Plan of Action" and, in order to facilitate the exchange and sharing of knowledge and experience, they had, in conjunction with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Community, set up a clearing house for the preparation and dissemination of information on national and regional population and development activities. Governments had been taking steps to achieve the goals of ICPD Programme of Action and he outlined several of the positive initiatives which had been taken.

68. Turning to the subject of human settlements, he said that the CARICOM Governments had long recognized the important role that human settlements played in the promotion of sustainable development. In fact a regional plan of action in the area of human settlement had been approved in November 1995, and a regional meeting would shortly be held in Jamaica to discuss matters relating to housing and urban development. The CARICOM Governments were committed to the full implementation of the Habitat Agenda in order to ensure that the goal of sustainable human settlements was realized.

69. Dr. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) welcomed the innovative approaches to adolescent reproductive health issues adopted by CARICOM countries and said that, UNFPA together with the International Planned Parenthood Federation would be issuing a report in 1997 on experiences in the area of adolescent reproductive health drawing on several examples from the Caribbean region. She hoped that the upcoming meeting between the small island

developing States and CARICOM countries would promote a better dissemination of the innovative experiences generated in the Caribbean.

70. Mr. TIENDREBEOGO (Burkina Faso) welcomed the guidelines for the United Nations resident coordinator system prepared by the Inter-Agency Task Force and also the emphasis put on basic social services for all. Indeed, access to such services remained fundamental to any poverty alleviation strategy. In that regard, the process of preparing indicators to monitor the various population and development programmes should be completed as soon as possible and widely disseminated, particularly outside the United Nations system. In the field, the United Nations should intensify cooperation with all actors in that area, including non-governmental organizations and associations. The initiatives of UNFPA could serve as models in that regard.

71. Concerning national progress in implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, his Government had emphasized awareness-raising and education, decentralization of public health services, and the involvement of the people themselves in national strategies for the implementation of the Programme of Action. That had led to the establishment of a wide network of very vibrant community-based associations and non-governmental organizations, especially in favour of women. Unfortunately, population and development programmes were competing with other priority programmes for scanty resources. He therefore appealed to the international community for additional resources. He reaffirmed Burkina Faso's support for the 20/20 initiative and hoped that other similar initiatives would be undertaken which would permit the identification of new sources of funding for population and development programmes.

72. Mr. LOZANO (Mexico) said that population policy was a key element in the consolidation of sustainable economic and social development. Accordingly, Mexico had incorporated the ICPD commitments into its national population policy. The basic objective of the national population programme for the period 1995-2000 was to raise living standards and the quality of life of all Mexicans, and to bring demographic trends into line with the country's potential for economic development. As a result of recent efforts, the population growth rate had declined from 2 per cent in 1990 to 1.8 per cent in 1995, while the overall fertility rate had dropped to 2.7 children per woman. Despite such progress, however, there were still major obstacles, the foremost being poverty - in economically depressed areas the population growth rate remained at the level it had been 20 years earlier.

73. Mexico attached considerable importance to South-South cooperation as a supplementary mechanism for strengthening the capacities of developing countries in the area of population policy. In that connection, he noted that one of the four centres of excellence for South-South cooperation in the area of reproductive health was based in Mexico. In view of the fundamental importance of migration in population policy, he welcomed the decision of the Commission on Population and Development to devote its thirtieth session to the analysis of that complex phenomenon. Mexico had hosted a regional conference on migration where it had been decided, inter alia, to encourage the adoption of a comprehensive, long-term approach to the regional phenomenon of migration in order to address both its causes and its manifestations. Indeed, the preparation of comprehensive studies that addressed the characteristics of

migration at the subregional, regional and global levels was the best means of getting to understand that phenomenon and identifying effective ways of dealing with its causes and consequences.

74. Mr. BIAOU (Benin) said that successive Governments in his country had long since recognized the links that existed between food security and population growth. The process of democratization and the easing of social tensions in the 1990s had created favourable conditions for the definition and implementation of a population policy and programmes. The country had just adopted a declaration on population policy, which outlined a number of objectives for the 20-year period 1996-2016, and which was designed to ensure balanced and sustained development in the context of respect for fundamental human rights. His country had received substantial support from UNFPA for its efforts in the area of population, particularly in the last year, and it welcomed the appointment of a national director for the UNFPA office in Benin.

75. In his view, it was important to devote particular attention to vulnerable and/or disadvantaged sectors of the population such as the elderly, women and the handicapped. It was equally important to combine the political will to attain social welfare objectives with the need to reflect population variables in economic and social development plans and programmes. The specific nature of population problems over time and space called for a vision which was national, regional and international in scope.

76. Mr. FLORENCIO (Brazil) said that population issues could not be addressed without also addressing the social and economic context in which individuals lived. Development considerations should be placed at the centre of decisions relating to population issues.

77. The Brazilian National Commission on Population and Development, which had been operating for a year, focused on research, analysis and programme initiatives in the population sector, promoted an ongoing dialogue with institutions as well as initiatives in the area of capacity-building and training in population matters. One of its main objectives was to ensure the access by all segments of Brazilian society to information on population and development issues. Brazil, which was currently going through a demographic transition, had an annual population growth rate of 1.5 per cent and average fertility rates of 2.6 per woman. About 70 per cent of Brazilian couples currently used some form of contraception. Considerable priority had been assigned to women's health. Furthermore, in view of the fact that adolescents accounted for 22 per cent of the country's population both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education were implementing a programme on sexually transmitted diseases and reproductive health. Ageing was also a national concern. In that connection, a workshop had been held in Brasilia in July 1996 on ageing which had recommended the establishment in Brazil of an international centre on ageing to stimulate research and encourage international cooperation on that issue.

78. The increasing allocation of financial resources for population purposes signalled the intention of the donor community to live up to its commitments. However, that increase should stem from new and additional resources and not from a reallocation of funds from other areas of cooperation. In that regard,

his delegation remained concerned about the financing of the Programme of Action and hoped that every effort would be made to achieve the target for the Year 2000. UNFPA should retain overall responsibility for international cooperation in population matters. Brazil supported the new approach adopted by the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board for resource allocation to low income and least developed countries, particularly in Africa. Efforts should also be made to supplement the resources available for population projects in the Latin American and Caribbean region, which lagged far behind in the allocation of financial resources for population and development on a concessional basis.

79. Mr. KEBEDE (Ethiopia) said that people-centred development and the empowerment of women had been adopted as guiding principles of his country's national population policy. The new constitution had recognized the equality of men and women, which clearly indicated the importance that Ethiopia attached to the participation of women in the political, social and economic life of the country. Since the Cairo Conference, more vigorous action was being taken to address the reproductive health needs of women and adolescents. Furthermore, population and family planning education was being incorporated into the curricula of educational institutions as it was believed that such programmes would provide adolescents with adequate knowledge about reproductive health and population and development in general. Surveys had also been conducted with the assistance of UNFPA in order to ensure reliable socio-economic and demographic data. The ICPD Programme of Action had been widely disseminated to government, non-governmental and other relevant bodies and institutions through workshops and seminars.

80. Encouraging results had been achieved in the three years since the adoption of Ethiopia's national population policy although much still remained to be done. The Government was firmly committed to supporting population programmes. UNFPA was currently the major donor agency for population activities in Ethiopia. In view of the multifaceted nature of population and development issues, additional resources needed to be mobilized from bilateral and other sources. In that regard, he hoped that the international community would allocate resources in line with the recommendations contained in decision 96/15 of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.